

INSIDE

TRACKS

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Bowhunter Education Graduate Is Lifelong Hunter

Irene Wilson has 4 children, 23 grandchildren, 60 great-grandchildren, and a great-great grandson. She has the grip of a truck driver. And she's a recent graduate of Montana's Bowhunter Education Course.

"I loved the course," said Wilson, 83, of Martin City, where she lives in a small mobile home that abuts a mountain. "I learned a lot, even though I've hunted for many years."

Wilson has shot rifles extensively, but archery is new to her.

"I started with a .22 when I was a young girl," she said. "Then I graduated to a .300 magnum. I found out the hard way—a broken nose—that you had to keep that baby tight against your shoulder when you shot. I haven't had much of a chance to shoot a bow yet, but I fully intend to."

Wilson said that she is limited by her arm length and strength when drawing a bow. She is seeking a pull

weight and draw combination that will work for her. "I'm excited about getting a bow. I have Cherokee in my background, but I don't seem to have inherited their knack," she said.

Her son set up a hay-bale target in her back yard where she hopes to practice this spring.

Bowhunter Education is a good course for anyone interested in the outdoors, according to Wilson. "If you ever had a desire to shoot a bow, that class will bring it out in you. I like the idea of having to stalk the animal and get close, or having the animal come to you. I hope eventually to be able to hunt from a tree stand."

Wilson had praise for Bowhunter Education Instructor Mike Shepard of Columbia Falls. "That young fellow has found his field," she said. "He presents the material so that the youngest and oldest (me) could understand it. He's a good teacher."

What has enabled Wilson to maintain her lifelong love of the outdoors? "I started out in Nebraska walking to a pond with a cane pole and a can of worms when I was a little girl. I still love to fish. I got so good at shooting that I could light a match with a bullet,

all kinds of tricky stuff like that. I can still shoot well enough with a rifle to hit the vital spot on a deer or elk."

"I think it comes down to staying young at heart. If you lose your sense of humor, you've lost it all. Then you begin to feel sorry for yourself. I had my first kid when I was 16, and I suppose I grew up with my kids; they raised me. And I think they did a heck of a job."



A HUNTER AND A GREAT-GREAT GRANDMOTHER, Irene Wilson is a recent graduate of Montana's Bowhunter Education Course. Wilson, 83, lives in Martin City.

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Mountain Lion Harvest Exceeds Quota

Hunters harvested 137 mountain lions (85 males, 52 females) in Region One during the 1993/94 season, exceeding the region-wide quota by 38 cats.

The quota was exceeded because a 48 hour time period is required after the quota is met in each hunting district before the district can be closed.

"Overall, this season was very good in terms of hunter success and male to female ratio," said Wildlife Biologist Jim Williams. "As expected, most of the cats were taken in areas where

white-tailed deer populations are high."

All of the hunting district quotas were met in the first month of the season, and nearly all lions were harvested by hunters using hounds.

According to Williams, this year's lion harvest may help reduce lion/human conflicts.

"Hunters harvested a number of lions in the Flathead Valley near the Swan Front," he said. "This has been a hot spot for conflicts in recent years, so this harvest may lessen the need for management actions by FWP."

Trapper Education Class Attracts 46 Students

The first trapper education class in Region One drew 46 students, ranging in age from 12 to 60. The class, held December 11 at FWP headquarters in Kalispell, combined lecture, demonstration and discussion to make points about basic trapping and fur handling methods.

Instructors, like Montana Trappers Association Vice President Gary Wilson, emphasized trapper responsibility.

"Each trapper's knowledge and ethical conduct will determine the future of our trapping heritage," said Wilson. "We need to focus on respect for furbearer resources and consideration for other people such as landowners."

Melissa Tuemmeuler, trapper education coordinator for the Montana Trappers Association and a life-long trapper, talked about the future of trapping, habitat conservation, and public attitudes about trapping.

Instructors also outlined the history of trapping, and discussed furbearer management, equipment, and trap setting methods. Dennis Shutz gave an excellent outdoor

demonstration of preparing a coyote set, and showed students how to flesh a beaver hide.

"We've received an overwhelming response about the course," said

Wilson. "Because of the interest, we're considering the possibility of another class this spring."

Persons interested in attending a trapper education class should call Wilson at 752-4677 for information.



YOUNG TRAPPERS. (Left to right) Dan Jorgenson, Christian Tranel, Micala Tranel, Jesse Ernst and Grant Kerley are some of the 46 students who participated in the first trapper education class in Region One. Because of the interest, a spring class is also being considered.

New Columbia Falls Warden Is Kalispell Native

Perry Brown is glad to be back in northwest Montana.

The new FWP Warden in Columbia Falls was born in Kalispell and raised in Libby, so he's familiar with the timber and backcountry in this corner of the state.

His district covers the Middle and South Fork Flathead drainages, much of it within the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex.

"This has got to be one of the best districts in the state," said Brown. "I feel really lucky to be here."

Brown, 28, started college in electrical engineering, but changed majors and received a degree in wildlife management from Montana State University. He served as a warden trainee and warden in Bozeman in 1987 and 1988. He then transferred to the Chinook district for five years be-

fore coming to the Flathead in July of 1993.

"I've found that this district is a very busy one," he said. "There's a lot more going on with all the water, fishing and boating. And I've really enjoyed working with the public and the agency people here."

Off duty, Brown enjoys bow hunting, gun hunting, and especially fishing; he is also known to be addicted to M & M candies. He lives in Columbia Falls with his wife, Devie, and 1½ year-old son, Zane.

NORTHWEST MONTANA NATIVE
Perry Brown is the new FWP Warden in Columbia Falls. His current duties cover the Middle and South Fork Flathead drainages, much of the area being within the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex.



From the Commissioner: Charlie Decker



One of the jobs of the FWP is setting hunting seasons for the next two years. This process begins with FWP staff preparing the tentative regulations. The Commission reviews these tentatives, and may revise them before approving them. This took place in Helena on December 13 and 14 for the 1994 and 1995 seasons.

The tentatives are then sent out for public comment. During January, Regions 1 and 2 will hold public meetings in different towns within these regions. I will try to attend as many of these meetings as possible.

Between now and February 5, I need your comments. Many people underestimate the importance of their comments and these meetings. I would like to hear from you whether you agree or disagree with these proposals. When the Commission votes on the tentatives, my decision will be based on your input, the Department's input, and what is best for the resource. If you make no effort to let me know how you feel, you will have no right to complain later.

On February 5, there will be a statewide public meeting in Helena. The Commission will take comments all that day. On February 7 and 8, we will set the seasons for the next two years.

SOME OF THE PROPOSALS FOR 1994-1995

Deer: Whitetail

- 1-either sex all season
- 2-either sex the first two weeks and the last week

Elk (Hunting Districts 100-124):

- 1-antlered bulls; cows on permits
- 2-browntined bulls; cows on permits

Bears:

- 1-shorter spring season
- 2-no spring season
- 3-shorter fall season
- 4-some combination of these

Turkeys:

- 1-region turkey permits in Flathead
- 2-unlimited hunting in Flathead

Upland Birds:

- 1-leave as is
- 2-cut daily limit from 5 to 3

Cougars:

I have had many comments about the increase in the number of cats. I would like to hear what people think about purchasing a tag to hunt cats without dogs during the regular hunting season. This would be a way to handle encounters with cats while hunting. These cats taken during hunting season would not count against the season quota.

Sheep, goats and moose:

These will be handled in June when the commission will set quotas for special tags. I have asked the department to figure out how it would change the odds on drawing one of these special tags if each hunter could only apply for one of the three species. Preliminary indicators are: moose—odds would increase only slightly; sheep—odds would increase from 3.5 percent to a little over 9 percent; and goats—odds would increase from 3.5 percent to about 20 percent.



In closing, I would like to remind you that my job as FWP Commissioner is to represent the sportsmen of Montana. To do this effectively, I must have your input. You will have to live with the decisions made on February 7 and 8 for the next two years.

My address is 176 Hammer Road, Libby, MT 59923, and my phone number is 293-6465. 

Angler Education Course Planned for Early March

We're looking for kids who want to learn about fishing and aquatic biology but for one reason or another haven't had the chance.

The first-ever angler education course in FWP Region One will be held March 1-5 in Kalispell. The course, patterned after the hunter education program, will target youth from 10-12 years old who are interested in fishing but don't normally have the opportunity to fish.

The course goals include:

- Develop in young anglers an awareness of aquatic ecosystems;
- Increase the knowledge of young anglers in the areas of angling skills, outdoor ethics, safety and sport fishing opportunities;
- Provide the opportunity for more youth to get involved in angling traditions.

The course will feature experienced instructors in the areas of spinning tackle, lures and bait; fly tying, fly casting, and aquatic insect identification; ice fishing techniques; and ecol-

ogy, anatomy, and habitat of fish. Students will have the opportunity to visit a fish hatchery, and they will take part in river fishing and ice fishing.

The course is scheduled for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights, with a field day on Saturday. Instruction will emphasize hands-on activities. Enrollment will be limited to 30-35 students chosen from a list of youth who indicate interest.

Youth interested in taking the course, which is free of charge, may get on the registration list by contacting FWP at 752-5501, or by stopping in at the Region One FWP office. Adults interested in attending the course and becoming an angler education instructor should also contact FWP.



FISHING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS are already second nature to some youngsters who have had the chance to learn about fishing first-hand. For those who haven't had the chance, FWP Region One will hold its first angler education course March 1-5 in Kalispell.

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